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and stimulate him. It would be a serious error to raise the bath temperature and continue the duration for fifteen minutes. Reaction is more favored by brief applications at low temperature than by prolonged applications at higher temperatures. To make the effect enduring, however, the cold application should be as long as the reactive capacity of the patient admits.

Another good rule in making cold applications (ablutions, effusions, etc.) is to omit washing the upper extremities below the elbows and the lower extremities below the knees. The circulation in these parts being feeble in sick people on account of absence of exercise, their reaction is feeble.

Then again it is well to know how to make cold ablutions, etc., rapidly, drying each part before proceeding to the next. Chilling is thus prevented and reaction correspondingly promoted.

That a nurse should strictly follow the physician's directions is one of the fundamental rules of good nursing, but hydrotherapie demands of a nurse more self-reliance and individual initiative than any other mode of treatment.

HÔPITAL GÉNÉRAL, RHEIMS

By E. N. LA MOTTE

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RHEIMS is an old French town with a population of a little over a hundred thousand, and situated rather off the usual tourist track—in fact, one must go to Rheims deliberately; it is not to be reached by getting off the train en route for somewhere else; but it has not been equally fortunate in getting off the route of marching armies, which from Roman days down almost to our own have always included it in their line of progress and have left upon it their impress. Here, in 496, Clovis was baptized and embraced Christianity. And here, also, after the twelfth century, nearly all the French Kings were crowned—in fact, it seems as if every street and house, and even the very cobblestones of the quaint old city, are rich in memories and associations with an historic and important past. It is not, therefore, a surprise to find that the large old Hôpital Général has its associations likewise, and that it was during the French Revolution, and probably because of it, that it was converted from its original design, that of a Jesuit monastery, and turned over to its present use. The monastery was built about the

year 1500—not old, according to European reckoning, but its whole appearance, inside and out, suggests very great age. It is of brick and stone, and presents a plain façade to the street and square of St. Maurice, but within it is built in squares, enclosing numbers of paved inner courts which are connected with one another by large stone archways. These courts are pleasant places for the patients to sit—they are shaded by large trees, and the grass grows between the paving-stones, giving a very restful and out-of-the-world appearance. On entering the buildings themselves one is struck by their singularly dark and ill-ventilated condition. The high ceilings and small windows about six feet from the floor, which, even when open, admit only a scanty amount of light, and still less fresh air, together with the rough stone floors and dark walls, combine to produce a most dreary effect. In every department it is the same. In some places the windows are not so high overhead, in some the floors are cement, but the effect of a half-light and heavy, ill-ventilated atmosphere is everywhere.

Strictly speaking, the *Hôpital Général* is not a hospital at all, but a home for the aged and orphans, of whom there are about seven hundred, separated into departments according to age, circumstance, and condition, but each department has its own ward attached for the care of its sick. Each of these wards or infirmaries holds thirty beds, and there is one such ward for every hundred and twenty inmates, and nearly always they are well-filled. At first glance such a ward was not prepossessing. The beds were all in a state of great disorder—and it is a well-known fact that a bed with covers pulled out from the foot and trailing on the floor on one side and with a pillow gone on the other can produce the effect of dirtiness even if the sheets have been changed that morning. The occupants of these beds were all old men, and they were crawling in and out to wait on themselves or their more helpless neighbors, with a fine disregard for keeping in place any article of apparel other than their red cotton nightcaps. To each ward there were “*infirmières*,” or caretakers, one or two, as it might be, untidy, helpless-looking women, with no very definite ideas of the requirements of their position, and the empty, unwashed plates and cups lying about on table and floor were trifles that seemed quite beneath their notice.

The dormitories where the inmates slept in some cases adjoined the wards; they were big, bare rooms, crowded with beds which were placed side by side and head to foot, and only separated from one another by a space a few inches wide. They were kept in immaculate order, however, but lack of proper air space was very evident, even though the rooms were empty.

In the children’s side of the institution the same conditions prevail.

They are taken in at any age up to thirteen, and taught to read and write and given an elementary education by specially appointed instructors, until at the age of thirteen situations or employment are found for them and they are sent away. The directress, who took me over the building, opened the door of the children's playroom, and instantly a herd of about fifty children, not one over four years of age, came tumbling out like little animals when the cage door is opened. Each was dressed in a blue cotton pinafore, and their heads were cropped closely except in a few cases where the possessor had been left with a little top-knot or forelock, the badge of femininity. Almost without exception they had ringworm, sometimes in most aggravated forms, yet none of them seemed "one penny the worse." A deafening chorus of "Bonjour, madame," and handshaking at the rate of seven at a time had to be gone through with before we could get on into the next department, where the older girls were. They likewise, in equal numbers, flung themselves on the door the minute it was unlocked, and a perfect pandemonium of "Bonjours" ensued, from which it was difficult to escape.

The hôpital kitchen is unique. It cannot be described, but the impression of a dark room, arched over by a high, vaulted stone ceiling, is mediæval in the extreme. A charcoal fire and utensils of burnished copper make bright patches in the quaint picture.

The hôpital possesses what is probably the finest linen-room that any institution ever had—indeed, it would be hard to find such another room, used for such a purpose, in any house, public or private. Originally it was the library of the monastery—a great room, a hundred feet or more in length, and less than half that in width, situated on the top floor of one of the buildings. Shelves run around the walls from one end to the other and extend to the ceiling, and the edges of these shelves, which are very wide, the divisions between them, and the ceiling itself are one mass of wonderful carving. Like all wood-carving of those days there is nothing superficial about the patterns—on the contrary, they are cut boldly and deeply, and the intricate and elaborate designs stand out in high relief. Half-way down one side of the room is a little closet with a window in it, and the doors and shelves of it are wonderfully carved; here the monks used to keep their "immoral books," but now books of every sort are gone, and the little closet as well as the shelves of the great library hold only the clean, new linen of the establishment.

Until two years ago nuns were in charge of this and other hospitals in Rheims, but they were then expelled, and the institutions placed under different control. The Hôpital Général is one of five which are under the management of one directress, herself not a nurse, but a woman of great executive ability, and who has begun as a first step in the reform

a violent crusade against dirt. Compared with its condition two years ago the hôpital is a perfect paradise of cleanliness. Among the débris were found in one of the rooms, encrusted with dirt, and used as common carpets, tapestries which have since proved to be of Gobelin make and of priceless value. At present they hang on the stone walls of the staircase near the old library, having been cleaned and restored as perfectly as possible.

The other institutions under the same management include a hospital for incurables, one for incurable children, one for convalescents, and a fourth which I have forgotten. The Civil Hospital for the "grandes maladies" is also emancipated from the nuns' authority, which took place two years ago, but it has a directress of its own. The directress of the Hôpital Général has had, and has, enormous difficulties to contend with. The "infirmières" (one cannot call them nurses, nor even caretakers, since that implies some little responsibility, which they carefully avoid) are, many of them, women of the lowest class. Drunkenness is common among them, and the discharge of one means the discontent of many and possible mutiny of all, so that progress is exceedingly slow, and every advance step has to be carefully thought out and planned for. As assistants the directress has eight "surveillantes" on a salary of a hundred francs (twenty dollars) a month, and fifty-two caretakers (including the "infirmières") whose wages range from fifty to sixty francs a month—which is fairly good pay. This, of course, does not include the force employed in the other four hospitals, which are in every way independent institutions and have nothing in common with this hospital, except that the same head directs their management.

The hôpital is well worth a visit. If one is inclined to criticise its present and most apparent shortcomings, a mental contrast with the conditions two years ago will silence such criticism effectually, and one will have nothing but praise for the management that has overcome great difficulties and has brought it to the condition in which it is to-day.

TO PREVENT LEAVING SPONGES IN ABDOMEN.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association* quotes the following from *Münchener Medicinische Wochenschrift*: "Calmann has a long tape fastened to each of his compresses and sponges. The ends of the tapes are taken up in a bunch and tied around one of the legs of the table, at the head, on the side where the instruments are handed to the operator. The tapes are long enough not to interfere with the use of the sponges in any way."